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WRITTEN SUBMISSION FOR THE 92nd SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE
ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
REGARDING THE CZECH REPUBLIC



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Introduction

The Public Defender of Rights of the Czech Republic (the “Ombudsman”) is an independent institution established by Act No. 349/1999 Coll., on the Public Defender of Rights and the Defender of Children’s Rights. Since July 2025, the Ombudsman has been executing the mandate of the National Human Rights Institution and his deputy has been acting as the Children’s Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman deals with cases of unlawful action and neglect of public authorities and carries out other mandates. These include the protection of persons deprived of liberty or dependent on care against ill-treatment, supervision of the detention of foreigners and the execution of expulsions, equal treatment and protection against discrimination, ensuring the right of EU citizens and their family members to free movement, and the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

This submission takes into account the report of the Czech Republic (CEDAW/C/CZE/7), the Committee’s list of issues (CEDAW/C/CZE/Q/7) and the Czech Republic’s replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/CZE/RQ/7). It provides an independent perspective on the key issues that impact the implementation of the Convention, drawing on the Ombudsman’s findings and insights. It includes recommendations to strengthen compliance with the Convention and the protection of women’s rights in practice.



A. Insufficient assessment of the impact of legislation on gender equality (Articles 2 and 3 of the Convention)

1. Although gender impact assessments (GIAs) are mandatory for legislative drafts presented in the Czech Republic, these are mostly formalistic or are not carried out at all. Many of the legislative drafts adopted in response to various crises during the period under review (the Covid-19 pandemic, the energy and inflation crises, among others), which demonstrably had a greater negative impact on women, were not properly assessed. This may lead to insufficient measures to address the risks of widening or maintaining inequalities in the draft legislation.

Recommendations

- 1) Carry out consistently proper gender impact assessments of legislative drafts.

B. Number of anti-discrimination claims brought by women and their success rate (Article 2 of the Convention)

2. In its list of issues, the Committee asked about the number of discrimination cases filed by women during the period under review and for more details on the sentences imposed on perpetrators, the reparations provided to victims and applications for exemptions from court fees (paragraph 5).
3. I am currently undertaking a survey focusing on the decision-making of Czech courts on anti-discrimination disputes over the past five years. The survey report will be published in the first half of 2026. However, I already have some statistical data available.
4. Between 2020 and 2023, the courts issued a total of 107 first-instance decisions on discrimination claims. Of these, 46 were brought by women. However, only 5 of these claims alleged sex as a protected characteristic. Claims brought by women were fully granted in 9 cases and partially granted in 8 cases. As regards the relief awarded in these lawsuits, compensation for tangible damage was granted four times (in the average amount of EUR 2,875), compensation for intangible damage six times (in the average amount of EUR 2,638), public apologies twice, and private apologies five times (in some cases, more than one form of relief was granted). The costs of the proceedings were borne by the claimants in 21 cases



and by the defendants in 16 cases. The average costs of the proceedings were EUR 2,348 for the claimants and EUR 3,527 for the defendants.

5. Until 30 September 2017, the court fee for filing an anti-discrimination claim was determined as a percentage of the requested compensation for intangible damage. Following an amendment to Act No. 549/1991 Coll., on court fees, the fee for filing a claim equals EUR 41. However, anti-discrimination disputes are complicated and are rarely resolved in the first instance, and the fee for filing an appeal against the first-instance ruling in an anti-discrimination case has not changed. It continues to be determined as a percentage of the amount claimed – if it is more than EUR 8,223 in damages, the court fee is 1% of that. As I have long been pointing out, this does not contribute to effective protection of rights for all victims of discrimination.¹

Recommendations

- 1) Reduce the court fee for filing an appeal against the first-instance decision in an anti-discrimination case to the amount charged for filing an anti-discrimination claim, i.e. EUR 41.

C. Insufficient funding for non-profit organisations assisting victims of crime (Articles 2, 5 and 6 of the Convention)

6. The lack of funding for organisations helping victims of crime (NGOs) has serious consequences for the position of victims of domestic and sexualised violence.
7. Although the Victims of Crime Act (2013) foresaw annual subsidies of EUR 2 million, actual funding was significantly lower and was later further reduced. In 2026, a mere EUR 324,834 is planned for subsidies; this covers few of the services required (NGOs need at least double that amount to survive). There are already no NGOs operating in some regions and specialised services for victims of domestic and sexualised violence are only available in the largest metropolitan areas.

¹ Ombudsman's observations, [File No. 45601/2019/S](https://eso.ochrance.cz/). All my documents are available in the ESO database at <https://eso.ochrance.cz/>



8. NGOs provide victims not only with counselling during criminal proceedings, but also with comprehensive services enabling to prevent secondary victimisation and to cope with the difficult situation. Insufficient funding makes it more difficult for victims to access help and it also increases the cost of aftercare for the government.

Recommendations

- 1) Increase the funding for the relevant subsidy title under the Victims of Crime Act to at least double the currently planned EUR 324,834 in 2026.

D. Status of migrant women, detention of families with children (Articles 3 and 6 of the Convention)

9. I found deficiencies in the recognition of vulnerable migrant women, such as victims of trafficking, in asylum and detention procedures.² Alternatives to detention were used only marginally for women³ and families with children^{4, 5}. A working group decided to create a pilot programme in this regard; however, it was not launched as of December 2025.
10. Identification of child victims of trafficking remains insufficient.⁶ Child victims can be accommodated in the Facility for Children of Foreign Nationals, which, however, does not provide protected shelter. The existing victim support programme is intended for adults only.⁷
11. Even after a longer stay in the country, Ukrainian families with temporary protection – mostly women and children – lack equal access to social protection, while the conditions for providing

2 Ombudsman's report, [File No. 6101/2019/VOP](#), Ombudsman's statement, [File No. 775/2020/VOP](#).

3 Ombudsman's letter, [File No. 4683/2021/VOP](#).

4 Ombudsman's report, [File No. 3127/2019/VOP](#).

5 [Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, Resolution of the Government Council for Human Rights on the detention of minor children of foreign nationals of 25 October 2023](#).

6 [Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings: Report concerning the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Czech Republic, GRETA\(2024\)11, paragraph 164](#).

7 [Programme of Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings – Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic](#).



humanitarian support have tightened. There was no functional system to identify vulnerable separated Ukrainian girls aged 15–18.⁸

Recommendations

- 1) Improve the identification of and support for child victims of trafficking.
- 2) Improve the recognition of vulnerable women in detention and asylum proceedings.
- 3) Create functional alternatives to detention.

E. Impact of maternity and parenthood on the employment of women (Article 11 of the Convention)

12. The legislation prohibits unequal treatment on grounds of sex in employment and access to employment. In fact, however, significant inequalities persist in this area and efforts to reduce them have been unsuccessful in the long term.

13. Discrimination in employment is one of the issues most frequently raised in the submissions brought to me by women. There are recurring complaints of discrimination in recruitment, termination of employment in connection with maternity or return to employment after maternity and parental leave. On the basis of this anecdotal evidence, I decided to conduct a survey in 2023.⁹

14. I found out, among other things, that:

- 61% of women had encountered prohibited questions in job interviews (e.g. about the number and age of their children);
- only 30% of women would return to their original employer after maternity and parental leave, most often because they could not reconcile this employment with childcare;
- one in six women had experienced a termination of employment as a result of pregnancy or maternity;

8 Ombudsman's letter, File Nos. [12715/2022/VOP](#), [11982/2022/VOP](#), [11981/2022/VOP](#).

9 Ombudsman's survey report, [File No. 30/2023/DIS](#), available in [English](#).



- in 96% of cases, women were the only ones to take parental leave, most often for financial reasons (the family could not afford the loss of the higher income of the other parent, usually the man);
- only 22% of women had returned to work before their child reached the age of three. One of the main barriers to returning to work earlier cited by the women was the inability to secure childcare.

15. The findings of this survey confirm the main known causes of the unequal position of men and women in the labour market – persistent stereotypes in the division of care and the lack of access to childcare facilities. A statutory guarantee of a place in such a facility for children from the age of three will take effect on 1 January 2026.

Recommendations

- 1) Introduce, as soon as possible, a guaranteed place in a childcare facility for children from the age of two, and prospectively also for children from the age of one.
- 2) Introduce a non-transferable part of parental leave for the second parent (a “rotation bonus”) of a minimum duration of two months with appropriate compensation for lost earnings in accordance with Articles 5 (2) and 8 (3) of Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers.

F. Impact of unavailable support on women carers (Articles 11, 13 and 14 of the Convention)

16. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires the State to ensure that people with disabilities have access to support enabling them to live independently (Article 19) and to enjoy an adequate standard of living and social protection (Article 28).

17. The Czech Republic has long faced a shortage of outreach and non-residential social services and significant regional inequalities. Where services are lacking, care shifts to families – most



often to women, who make up the majority of informal carers.¹⁰ At the same time, there is no separate financial support for informal carers. The main source of funding is a care allowance, but this benefit is provided to the person being cared for and does not cover the real costs of care or the loss of the carer's income. I have repeatedly drawn attention in my surveys¹¹ to the lack of access to services and summarised the issue in my observations on the Autism-Europe collective complaint.¹² Similarly, I recommend an increase in and regular valorisation of the long-term care allowance.¹³

18. Caring women face a high risk of exhaustion, poverty, social isolation and long-term exclusion from the labour market. Unavailability of services increases the intensity of care and reduces the possibility of employment and rest. The low amount of the care allowance and the lack of valorisation mean that the costs of care are largely borne by carers themselves. The impacts are most severe for women caring for people with the highest levels of support needs, single mothers and women in regionally disadvantaged areas.

Recommendations

- 1) Increase the capacity of outreach and non-residential social services and ensure their regional accessibility.
- 2) Increase and automatically valorise the care allowance.
- 3) Introduce a separate benefit or some other appropriate financial support for informal carers.
- 4) Recognise and reflect on the gender dimension of informal care in legislation and public policies.

10 Cf. [EASPD, Empowering Families and Informal Carers, Policy Paper](#).

11 Ombudsman's survey reports: PAS, [File No. 45/2018/OZP/VV](#); children with disabilities, [File No. 11/2019/OZP/MPA](#); deinstitutionalisation, [File No. 27/2022/OZP/AN](#); CRPD monitoring [File No. 73/2024/OZP/PPO](#).

12 Collective complaint No. 245/2025, submitted to the European Committee of Social Rights. [Ombudsman's press release of 20 November 2025](#).

13 Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2022, [File No. 12011/2023/S](#), p. 10; [Ombudsman's press release of 16 April 2024](#).



G. ME/CFS – women’s access to health care and social support (Articles 11 and 12 of the Convention)

19. Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME/CFS) is a serious chronic disease with long-term functional consequences, and epidemiological studies have repeatedly confirmed its significantly higher prevalence among women.
20. In the Czech Republic, however, the diagnosis and treatment of this disease show major systemic deficiencies. My findings indicate that patients often wait years for a diagnosis, undergo repeated examinations by multiple specialists without any co-ordination of care, and their difficulties are often downplayed or mistakenly subsumed under psychiatric diagnoses.¹⁴
21. These failures have serious social and economic consequences. Patients with ME/CFS often lose the possibility of employment and a stable income. In addition, the lack of recognition of functional limitations hinders access to disability pensions and social protection.

Recommendations

- 1) Establish guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of ME/CFS.
- 2) Build a network of specialised multidisciplinary workplaces.
- 3) Reinforce the training of health professionals in this area.

H. Mental health of girls and young women and lack of access to health care (Article 12 of the Convention)

22. Children and young people aged 11–25 identify mental health as the most problematic area of their lives.¹⁵ Cyberbullying and hate content on the internet is widespread, much of it directed at women.¹⁶ In 2023, up to 40% of ninth-grade primary school students showed signs of moderate to severe depression and 30% exhibited signs of anxiety, with girls twice as likely

14 Ombudsman’s recommendation, [File No. 54/2024/OZP/PH](#).

15 Ombudsman’s survey report, [File No. 1827/2025/VOP/BJ](#).

16 [Ipsos, T-Mobile, In Iustitia: Cyberbullying and Hate Content Online](#).



as boys to show these symptoms.¹⁷ Girls are more prone to anorexia nervosa (with a girl-to-boy ratio of 10:1)¹⁸ and to self-harm (roughly 3:1).¹⁹

23. The persistent shortage of child psychiatrists, child clinical psychologists and child psychiatric beds is alarming in this context.²⁰ There are only 157 child psychiatrists practicing in the whole country, and nearly half of them may retire within five years. There is a shortage of about 300 beds and 23 residential care facilities.²¹

24. We are facing a shortage of other medical specialties for paediatric and adult patients, especially general practitioners²² and dentists.²³ The elderly, young children and their carers (usually women) are often unable to travel to more distant surgeries. The individuals concerned are thus left without preventive check-ups, which increases the risk of late detection of diseases.

Recommendations

- 1) Reinforce child mental health care capacity.
- 2) Improve access to primary care in the regions.

17 [National Institute of Mental Health: National Monitoring of Child and Adolescent Mental Health.](#)

18 Koutek, Jiří and Kocourková, Jana: Eating Disorders in Childhood and Adolescence, *Česko-Slovenská pediatrie (magazine)* No. 3/2024.

19 [Veselý et al.: Non-Suicidal Self-Injury in Czech Adolescents.](#)

20 Ombudsman's submission within the Universal Periodic Review, [File No. 37491/2022/S](#), paragraph 21 *et seq.* Available in English.

21 [ČTK: Half of Child Psychiatrists May Retire Soon, 300 Beds Missing.](#)

22 [ČT24: A Critical Shortage of Paediatricians in the Czech Republic.](#)

23 [ČT24: Hundreds of Thousands of People in the Czech Republic Don't Have a Dentist.](#)



I. Health care in connection with pregnancy and childbirth (Article 12 of the Convention)

25. I have received numerous complaints from women regarding care during childbirth.²⁴ The women objected to various procedures to which they had not given informed consent (vaginal examination, medication or preventive episiotomy, which was performed in 15% of the women giving births in 2024).²⁵ Even more often, they pointed out that health professionals had not respected their birth plans. This also raises the issue of inadequate availability of midwifery care.²⁶ A specific area of the mothers' grievances was their separation from their children immediately after birth and not allowing skin-to-skin contact (bonding). In 2022, bonding did not take place for more than one-third of newborns.²⁷

26. Since 2019, the Government has been developing a strategy to reform maternity services towards respectful care. The strategy has yet to be adopted.

Recommendations

- 1) Modernise Czech maternity care with an emphasis on the autonomy of women giving birth and on the human rights of women giving birth and newborns.

J. Compensation for unlawful sterilisations (Article 12 of the Convention)

27. Since 1 January 2022²⁸, persons who were unlawfully sterilised in a medical facility in the territory of the present-day Czech Republic between 1 July 1966 and 31 March 2012 have been able to apply for a lump sum compensation of EUR 12,335. The original three-year period

24 Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2022, [File No. 12011/2023/S](#).

25 [National Health Information Portal \(NHIP\): Selected Indicators of Health Care in Czech Maternity Hospitals – Data Summary](#).

26 [Ombudsman's press release of 22 June 2018](#).

27 [NHIP: Newborns and Care in the Delivery Room](#).

28 Act No. 297/2021 Coll., on the provision of a one-off compensation for survivors of unlawful sterilisation and on the amendment of certain related laws.



for filing claims for compensation was extended by an amendment to the Act until 4 January 2027.

28. I have received 185 complaints from women regarding the Ministry of Health's handling of their claims for compensation. I opened an inquiry into 120 cases. In my inquiries, I have identified the following systemic deficiencies:

- Poor and unhelpful communication of the Ministry with the applicants.
- Long-term failure to deal with applications and appeals within the statutory time limits.
- Automatic refusal of applications from applicants who lack evidence due to the shredding or destruction of medical records.
- Discontinuation of proceedings on repeated applications on the grounds that they do not present any new facts, without their proper reconsideration.
- Failure to respect the current case law of administrative courts.
- Long-term staffing shortages in the department that handles compensation claims at the Ministry.

29. I reported my findings to the Czech Government in 2024 and proposed remedial action.²⁹ Although the Ministry has expedited decision-making on the applications, it still does not comply with the statutory time limits, fails to follow case law and discontinues proceedings on repeated applications.

30. The purpose of the Compensation for Unlawful Sterilisation Survivors Act is not fulfilled merely by the possibility to apply for compensation, but rather only by the application of the Act itself to specific cases. The Ministry is supposed to remedy the unacceptable interference by the State in fundamental human rights, not to aggravate it.

Recommendations

- 1) Reinforce the staffing of the Ministry's department that handles compensation claims.
- 2) Ensure that the statutory time limits are complied with in proceedings on applications and appeals against refusals.

29 Ombudsman's sanction, [File No. 9/2024/SZD](#).



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- 3) Require adherence to the current case law of administrative courts.

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